

# 2007 Mid-Session Report



## State Representative Kevin Van De Wege



### 24th Legislative District

*Greetings!*

*Thank you for allowing me to serve you in our Legislature.*

*We're well underway now, on our way to accomplishing great things on education, property issues and health care.*

*Hopefully you have a minute or two to read further into these issues. As always, let me know what you think.*

*Thanks again and take care,*

Kevin Van De Wege

**State Representative  
24th District  
Kevin  
Van De Wege  
Assistant Majority Whip**

#### **Committees:**

- Agriculture & Natural Resources
- Technology, Energy & Communications
- Appropriations Subcommittee on General Government & Audit Review

#### **Member of:**

- Coastal Caucus
- Working Family Caucus and Steering Committee

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1-800-635-9993



#### **Jobs Update:**

- ✓ Creating research/business zones (HB 1091)
- ✓ Creating jobs in rural counties (HB 1566)
- ✓ Relief on small business taxes (HB 1171)

### **Health Care: keeping costs down, increasing coverage**

Everyone is feeling the effects of our health care crisis:

- Families are paying more to stay covered
- Employers offering benefits see their profits shrinking
- Taxpayer help pays for less and helps fewer

Here's what I'm hoping we can do this year to move towards getting health care costs down:

- ✓ Looking at existing programs, finding out what is working and then applying that success to help more people (HB 2000).
- ✓ Reforming the way we do health care in our state through legislation called the "connector" is another exciting approach we're working on. The idea brings more people into coverage pools and allows the state to negotiate better pricing (HB 1569).
- ✓ By covering all children by 2010 we will cut down on future costs associated with early, untreated problems. This year HB 1071 will help more kids get coverage, have agencies work more with parents, and establish systems to ensure children get healthier.



**Please join me  
at these upcoming  
Town Halls!**

**Clallam County – Port Angeles Senior Center  
March 17 – 9:00 am**

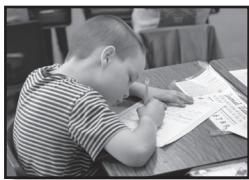
**Jefferson County – Port Townsend Community Center  
March 17 – 12:30 pm**

**Grays Harbor – Port of Grays Harbor  
Commissioner's Room  
March 19 – 8:00 pm**

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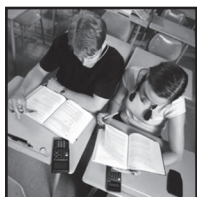
## Education: helping children succeed now, and later in life



While our education system has problems, its successes far outweigh them.

What we can do in Olympia:

- ✓ The state's constitution requires our first duty be to **fund basic education**. This year we'll take steps to help fund vital, basic programs through our budget. Proposals currently include raising the state's portion per student by \$300.
- ✓ Studies are coming out everyday showing how vital it is to **begin a child's education early**. Previous efforts will be expanded to use early learning as a building block to getting each child a world-class education (HB 1663).
- ✓ Smart students graduating from high school deserve a chance for a state **college education**. Unfortunately many high-quality students are turned away due to lack of space, which is why I support a provision in the Governor's budget that will add 8,300 spots at our universities.



## Property taxes: relief for homeowners

For many, the dream of success means buying a home for your family that you can also one day retire in.

When a family can call a home their own everyone benefits. Communities are stronger and families build equity. It's that principle that makes getting some relief to property taxpayers such a high priority. Everyone suffers when families are taxed out of their homes.



- ✓ Six years ago voters approved a **1% cap on property tax increases** through Initiative 747. Last year, it was struck down – we need to reinstate it. Families and seniors on tight budgets can't afford huge increases, so I'm supporting efforts to restore the limit and keep government spending wisely (HB 2117).
- ✓ Throughout Western Washington, including here on the peninsula, home values are taking off. Unfortunately for our seniors and families, these jumps in value mean stiffer tax bills in the mail. We can **make property taxes predictable** again through legislation to cap home value assessments also at one percent (HJR 4205).

House colleagues congratulate Rep. Kevin Van De Wege after passing another piece of legislation.



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